

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

IO-10 /068 W

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O R 081605Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1389

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 104

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: PPD THREATENS TO LEAVE CABINET IF BILL INSTITUTIONALIZING
UNITARY LABOR FEDERATION PASSES

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT AT CABINET SESSION LAST NIGHT BILL TO INSTITUTIONALIZE A UNITARY LABOR FEDERATION FORMALLY PROPOSED. PPD MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO MAGALHAES MOTA SAID TO HAVE THREATENED PPD WITHDRAWAL FROM GOVERNING COALITION SHOULD BILL PASS. SOCIALIST JUSTICE MINISTER SALGADO ZENHA, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF SOCIALIST PARTY, ALLEGEDLY SUPPORTED ARGUMENTS ADVANCED BY MOTA AGAINST PASSAGE OF BILL IN PRESENT FORM, ALTHOUGH HE STOPPED SHORT OF COMMITTING PS TO QUIT GOVERNMENT OVER ISSUE. PRIOR TO CABINET MEETING ZENHA TOOK RARE STEP OF HARSHLY CRITICIZING MANY FEATURES OF BILL IN LETTER TO EDITOR OF DIARIO DE NOTICIAS.

2. PCP LEADER ALVARO CUNHAL SPOKE IN FAVOR OF BILL, ARGUING THAT SINCE IT APPROVED BY COMMITTEE OF TWENTY IN ITS LAST
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SESSION, CABINET SHOULD GO ALONG. MAGALHAES MOTA ALLEGEDLY

RETORTED THAT CABINET LEGALLY EMPOWERED TO PASS LOWS, NOT AFM, AND THAT BILL UNCONSTITUTIONAL IN PRESENT FORM, OPPOSED BY TWO OF THREE COALITION PARTIES, AND THEREFORE SHOULD NOT BE VOTED INTO LAW. AFTER 15 MINUTES OF ANIMATED DISCUSSION, PRIME MINISTER STOPPED DEBATE, ORDERING THAT SUBJECT BE BROUGHT UP AGAIN JAN 17.

3. AFTER CABINET SESSION OVER, PPD POLITICAL COMMITTEE MET IN EMERGENCY SESSION TO OUTLINE FUTURE STRATEGY OVER ISSUE. CONTACT WAS MADE WITH SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS, WHO ACCORDING TO TWO WELL-PLACED PPD SOURCES, AGREED TO STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH PPD OVER ISSUE. PPD BELIEVES THAT THEY CAN FORCE HAND OF AFM ON THIS ISSUE, SINCE TO LEAVE GOVERNMENTAL COALITION TO PCP ALONE WOULD BE POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO PRESENT AFM HIERARCHY. OUR PPD SOURCES SAY THEY WILLING TO GO ALL WAY ON THE ISSUE OF LABOR FREEDOM, AND WILL FORCE AFM TO MAKE A DECISION ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. EXPECTATION ON PART OF PPD IS THAT INTERSINDICAL WILL COUNTERATTACK BEFORE 17TH WITH SHOW OF FORCE, PERHAPS ALLOWING OR PROMOTING SERIES OF STRIKES.

4. COMMENT: MAGALHAES MOTA'S AIDE FEELS THAT PPD MAY WIN THIS ISSUE, ALTHOUGH WE NOT SO SURE. UNIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT UNDER INTERSINDICAL CONTROL IS ONE WHICH VERY IMPORTANT TO PCP, AND WE DOUBT THEY WILLING TO GIVE IN EASILY. SOME SORT OF COMPROMISE SHORT OF FORMAL VOTE LIKELY, BUT NATURE NOT KNOWN.
SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY ALLIANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON00104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750007-0719
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750170/aaaacjey.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2003 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PPD THREATENS TO LEAVE CABINET IF BILL INSTITUTIONALIZING UNITARY LABOR FEDERATION PASSES
TAGS: PINT, PO, PPD
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006